खान मंत्रालय के राज्य मंत्री (श्री बलराम सिंह यादव) : (क) से (ग) जानकारी एकत्र की जा रही है और सभा पटल पर रख दी जाएगी।

Mineral Exploration Corporation Ltd.

2126. SHRI G. PRATHAPA REDDY : DR. SHRIKANT RAMCHANDRA JICHKAR :

Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Mineral Exploration Corporation Limited is running in loss for the last three years;

(b) whether Government propose to privatise the said corporation and if so, by when; and

(c) whether the Mineral Exploration Corporation Limited has the technical knowhow and the equipment for exploration in consonance with the latest technology available in the world ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF MINES (SHRI BALRAM SINGH YADAV) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Mineral Exploration Corporation Limited (MECL) has the technical knowhow and equipment to carry out exploration as generally practised in countries world over.

Gold Deposits in Singhbhoom District Bihar

2127. SHRIMATI KAMLA SINHA : Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that Geological Survey of India has discovered a huge quantity of Gold deposit in a remote village in Singhbhoom District of Bihar;

(b) whether it is a fact that Gold has also been found in Monghyr District of Bihar; and

(c) if so, what steps Government have taken to start the gold mining process and to check present illegal mining in these areas ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF MINES (SHRI BALRAM SINGH YADAV) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Exploration so far carried out by State Government of Bihar in Sonu Block, Karmatiya Village, Munger District have indicated low gold values between less than 0.1—1.8 g/t of gold. The data obtained so far are not sufficient to establish reserves. Gold mining can be considered only after techno-economic viability of the deposits is established. Checking of illegal mining of minerals is governed by the concerned rules of the State Government.

Production of Copper

2128. SHRI SHIV PRATAP MISHRA : Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that copper industry is facing a tough competition in the domestic market; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the steps Government propose to take for the survival of the industry ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF MINES (SHRI BALRAM SINGH YADAV) : (a) and (b) Due to poor grade of copper ore, the cost of producing copper in the country is not internationally competitive, Reduction in import duty on copper has also affected the indigenous copper industry. International price of copper has registered sharply declining trends recently due to sluggish market conditions which too has affected realisable copper prices particularly when copper metal is freely importable now.